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JELLY MAKING

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A radio talk by Fanny Walker Yeatman, Junior Home Economics Specialist, Bureau of Home Economics, delivered through Station WRC and 16 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, June 13, 1929.

Jelly is generally better home-made than bought. Some women really look upon the ability to make jelly as a test of good housekeeping. Perfect jelly must have, not only color and sparkling clearness, but that quivery tenderness of texture, and fresh fruit flavor, which only come from knowing how.

In order to help the housewife in the preparation of jelly, a scientific study has been made by the Department of Agriculture. These studies show that three ingredients are necessary for good jelly: pectin, acid, and sugar, and that these must be present, in fairly definite proportions, to insure success. Fortunately, this study has also pointed the way to controlling these proportions and adding ingredients which are lacking. First of all, you must know what fruits contain pectic and acid, in sufficient amounts. Cherries, rhubarb, strawberries, huckleberries, peaches and pears all lack pectin. Jelly can only be prepared from these fruits by the addition of home-made or commercial pectin. If jelly is to be made from huckleberries, pears, some varieties of strawberries, and sweet cherries, you must add acid as well as pectin; but today, I am going to limit our discussion to the fruits which have natural jelly making qualities.

Tart apples, crabapples, quince and some varieties of plums, blackberries, currants, gooseberries, grapes, red and black raspberries, when selected at the proper stage of ripeness, contain both pectin and acid in satisfactory amounts to form an excellent jelly, if properly prepared.

It may sound complicated, but it is not, really. Six to eight pounds can be handled more satisfactorily than a larger quantity, and can be cooked quickly. This is an important point in preserving flavor and color. Use a mixture of ripe and underripe fruit. The ripe fruit is better flavored, and the underripe contains more pectin and acid, which, combined with sugar, contribute the jelly making properties. If you must use overripe fruit, add acid in the form of one tablespoon of lemon juice, to each cup of fruit juice just before it is combined with the sugar. The lemon juice improves flavor, texture, and clearness, especially with berries.

But, now let us consider the preparation of the fruit. The hard fruits, apples, crabapples, and quinces, must be washed thoroughly, scrubbed if necessary with a vegetable brush. Then remove the stem and blossom end, cut the fruit into quarters, without removing skins or cores, and cover with water. Use about one-half as much water, by measure, as fruit. Cook these fruits until they are soft, say from 15 to 25 minutes -- stirring toward the end to prevent burning.

The soft fruits should be weighed, and washed by lifting carefully from one bowl of water to another until clean. Do not bruise the fruit at this stage, or you will lose valuable juice. Drain and place in a pan. Crush the fruit, to start the flow of juice. Then heat it to boiling point, stirring

constantly. Boil rapidly 3 to 10 minutes, depending upon the condition of the fruit. Juice for jelly making can be extracted from all berries, without adding water, though with blackberries and currants, and black raspberries you get a better jelly if you add one-fourth to one-half cup of water to each pound of fruit.

Pour the cooked fruit into a bag made of Canton flannel or double cheesecloth. Suspend from a wire rack, or a wooden support, and allow the juice to drip into a bowl. Do not squeeze if you wish a clear jelly. When the flow of juice stops, press the bag lightly, with the flat sides of two knives to start the dripping again. Some housewives keep the first juice separate, for company jelly. You can cook the pulp up again, adding water, for a second extraction, but perhaps a more satisfactory use is to rub the pulp through a strainer, and make a spiced butter. This will be very much appreciated in winter, served with meat or as a spread on bread.

Well, we have selected the fruit, properly prepared it, extracted the juice and now we are ready for the jelling.

Again, let me warn you -- do not cook too much juice at one time. Four to six cupfuls is wise. For each cup of juice, use from $\frac{3}{4}$ to 1 cup of sugar, except in the case of currants. Currants have so much pectin that it is better to use $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups of sugar to each cup of juice, provided no water has been added when extracting the juice. Place the juice and sugar in a large flat bottomed pan, to insure rapid evaporation. Stir until the sugar is dissolved, and then boil rapidly. When the juice runs from a large spoon, in a sheet instead of in drops, the jelly point has been reached.

Then remove the jelly from the fire instantly, remove the skum, and pour the jelly into hot sterilized glasses. Take care that no jelly drops on the inside edge of the glass near the rim. Fill the glass to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top. The low jelly glass is preferred because in this, the jelly keeps its shape when served.

Cover the jelly with a clean cloth to protect it from dust. Let it stand until firm. Do not be discouraged if the jelly does not "set" the first day. Sometimes a jelly that "sets" slowly has the best texture. Place the jelly in the sun so the surface may dry and provide a better seal. After the jelly is firm, cover the top with melted paraffin. Rotate the glass while the paraffin hardens so that it will form a high rim. Then adjust the tin top of the glass, label with the date and the kind of jelly, and store in a dry cool place.

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